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SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION

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WHISTLER'S ART DICTA

A. E. G.

WHISTLER'S ART DICTA
AND
OTHER ESSAYS

BOSTON : CHARLES E. GOODSPEED
LONDON : ELKIN MATHEWS
MDCCCCIII

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NOTE

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written to Mr. W. M. G. & let him that you would take it -

Bring it home and if you think it dry enough, give it a rapid and even coat of varnish? - for I know it would be much more brilliant with it. But this is what I want you to understand. I painted the panel out in the full sun -

and some of the spray got upon it. and the salt made it a very long time in drying. and the last time I examined it. some two or three months ago, the surface seemed to me still sticky - so that I did not touch it, & it has never been touched.

That's not it in any way - Perhaps you might possibly wash it with a little beer or a soft brush. and that might take off any salt. I would say it was hot air. only I fear the panel would warp - However you know all these things and in your hands I know I am perfectly safe - Therefore I leave it possible, varnish it. The panel is nicely made in the frame

110 To Mr. Bar. Gail

with the little board as to back & paste it in
and take it to the gallery also right. The second
evening. So that
it may be in
time for 1st
press view.

Dear Mr. Richardson — I was very pleased to
hear from you and to find that every thing is as
well as with you. Wish me a line to let me
know how the pictures took the morning & and how
they looked when you had put them upon the
frames. Now I want you to go at once tomorrow
morning and bring away from Mr. Rogers gallery a number
painting of mine / but they have placed upon a wall
it is called "Blow & Violent" — Among the "Pollens" — I have
with me a line to tell me how
you got on, and how it looks —
With my best wishes for your continued success,
Very Truly Yours
J. M. W. Turner

WHISTLER'S ART DICTA

IN the autumn of 1897 the proclamation of a London publisher contained the information that a new edition of "The Gentle Art of Making Enemies" was about to make its appearance. Max Beerbohm seized upon this joyful news and made it the subject for one of his inimitable essays. "Oasis found in the desert of Mr. William Heinemann's Autumn List!" he exclaimed with proper enthusiasm,— "most exquisite announcement!" But, alas, the "exquisite announcement" did not bear fruit, for Mr. Whistler's continued ill health—I have it on the authority of his publisher, and I chronicle it for the first time—Mr. Whistler's health did not permit him to make the exertion which the preparation of a new edition would entail.

And again are we doomed to disappointment. When Mr. Heinemann's Autumn, 1903, notices began to crop out in the public prints, we discovered among them this selfsame "exquisite announcement." But again, alas! for this new edition turned out to be nothing but a reprint of the edition published in 1892. However, let us not be too despondent, for the earlier editions of "The Gentle Art" are classed among those wondrous tomes which the auctioneer carefully designates as being "scarce" or "*very rare*," and we should therefore be duly grateful for this latest "Gentle Art," even if it be but a reprint.

The first edition of Whistler's book, in which "the serious ones of this earth, carefully exasperated, have been prettily spurred on to unseemliness and indiscretion," bears the title-page which is repro-

THE GENTLE ART OF
MAKING ENEMIES :
EDITED BY SHERIDAN FORD

NEW YORK
FREDERICK STOKES & BROTHER

1890

duced in facsimile on the opposite page. This book is the collection of Whistler's letters to the London newspapers, and the accounts of his quarrels, which were prepared for publication by his secretary, Sheridan Ford, with Whistler's approval and assistance. Just as the book was about to go to press, Whistler suddenly decided to place the material in the hands of another, and he wrote to Mr. Ford, enclosing a cheque for ten guineas, and prayed him to let the matter rest. To this letter Sheridan Ford replied that he did not fancy this arrangement, saying, "I assure you that the book projected by me will see the light in due season; and the story of your charming *camaraderie* being now public, will be scheduled with the rest of the trophies. So will this letter."

This, the earliest version of "The Gentle Art," comprises about the same col-

lection of letters which a few months later appeared in the authorized edition, an essay by the editor on “Mr. Whistler as the ‘Unattached Writer,’” and a chapter containing twenty-two Whistler anecdotes. Such is the matter which was published in this volume, a duodecimo, of two hundred and fifty-six pages, bound in green paper with type-set titles printed in red. When the book, after many futile efforts, finally appeared, it was promptly suppressed, and the few copies which survived are, I imagine, worth their weight in radium.

The edition of “The Gentle Art” which was “printed under” Whistler’s “own immediate care and supervision” appeared the same year as the “garbled version,” and bore the imprint in London of William Heinemann, and in New York of the John W. Lovell Co. This volume, which was reprinted in 1892, with the ad-

dition of the catalogue of “Nocturnes, Marines, and Chevalet Pieces,” and five letters, three written by Whistler, and the book of which the 1904 edition is an exact reprint, is an octavo of two hundred and ninety-two pages, bound in brown boards stamped in gold. The matter contained in it comprises fifty-eight letters written by Whistler to the press, many quotations from newspapers, several interviews, Whistler’s account of the Whistler *v.* Ruskin case, “Mr. Whistler and his Critics,”—this being the catalogue of an exhibition of his etchings and dry-points, with quotations from his severest critics under each title, and frequent annotations by Whistler,—as well as a number of pieces of art criticism.

All of Whistler’s contributions to the literature of art criticism are to be found col-

lected in “The Gentle Art,” as are all his writings in fact, except his “valentine with a verdict” entitled “Eden *versus* Whistler, The Baronet and the Butterfly,” and some stray letters addressed to the newspapers. They bear the following titles: “Whistler *v.* Ruskin, Art and Art Critics;” “The Propositions;” “The Propositions, No. 2;” “The Red Rag;” Mr. Whistler’s “Ten O’Clock,” and “A Further Proposition.”

The first of these is Whistler’s commentaries on the famous case indicated by its title; the second is a set of rules for etchers; the third contains rules for the guidance of art critics; “The Red Rag” is an interview with Whistler in which he explains his theories; the “Ten O’Clock” is his lecture on art, with its most exquisite diction and sound principles, delivered in London, Cambridge and Oxford,

in 1885; and "A Further Proposition" instructs painters in what manner they should paint flesh.

In the course of a review of D. S. MacColl's wholly admirable "Nineteenth Century Art," in the *Fortnightly Review*, of March, 1903, Arthur Symons said, "Everything that Mr. Whistler has written about painting deserves to be taken seriously;" and certainly this is but a fair valuation of Whistler's art dicta. The interesting, if rather too eulogistic, "appreciation" of Whistler's art which Messrs. Way and Dennis have lately given us contains a chapter on "Mr. Whistler as a Writer," and in this essay the authors have echoed Mr. Symons' opinion. And they have made a more complete statement of the case by saying that the remaining contents of "The Gentle Art," his "ephemeral quarrels," are "better forgotten."

This is the opinion of an art critic, but not of a lover of fine writing for its own sake. Many of the letters are perfect gems,—especially the briefer ones,—and in them “he projected the clear-ringing echo of himself.” I quote from an essay on Whistler’s writings by “Max,” the opening paragraph, which appeared in the Pall Mall Magazine of May, 1904. Also says this keen observer that “Ten O’Clock” is fragmentary, that it “lacks structure.” More satisfying are the etchings and the smaller canvases than those requiring a greater and more sustained effort—and so it is with his writings.

Whistler’s pamphlet, “Art and Art Critics,” is a “vigorous onslaught on the critics,” as these critics term it; and Whistler’s opinion that the painter should be the “critic and sole authority” on painting was disputed in the strongest terms at the

time by the art critic of the Times, Tom Taylor, who insisted that the opposite of this was true, and wrote (the document is given in "The Gentle Art"): "God help the artists if ever the criticism of pictures falls into the hands of painters! It would be a case of vivisection all round." Assuredly, an essay on the artist as art critic would be very interesting—if only to show that his naturally prejudiced opinions are but of little value. Whistler himself gave vent to many extraordinary utterances regarding several of the world's greatest painters, but we are in full accord with Messrs. Way and Dennis when they say that "a collection of his *obiter dicta* would make an excellent text-book on the underlying principles of art," and also when they add that "a study of them would do much—indeed it has done much—to raise the general level of art criticism."

AUBREY BEARDSLEY : MAN OF LETTERS

I

AUBREY BEARDSLEY's published literary remains, consisting of an unfinished novel, two original poems, and a rendering into English of "Catullus: Carmen CI," have recently been "collected," and with certain added matter we have the latest contribution to Beardsleyana—that vast and ever-increasing literature.¹ These efforts of the artist as writer originally appeared in *The Savoy*, the luxurious quarto edited by Arthur Symonds in 1896, and contributed to by the great originals of that period: the essayists, poets, and artists quaintly spoken of by contem-

¹ " *Under the Hill, and Other Essays in Prose and Verse.*" By Aubrey Beardsley. London and New York: Lane, 1904.

porary chroniclers as belonging to the New Literature and the New Art. A farce written by Beardsley while a student at the Brighton Grammar School, which was performed by amateurs, does not appear to have been preserved.

Mr. John Lane introduces Beardsley's writings with some recollections of the artist, whose reputation, he tells us, is steadily increasing in most of the countries of Europe and in America. Beardsley's "Table Talk" is another feature of the volume; and in it we have recorded numerous scraps of his conversation, recalled, presumably, by people who knew him. These remarks concern such topics as the Impressionists and English Literature, George Sand, Mendelssohn, Weber, Rossini, Pope, Shakespeare. Epigrammatic and critical, they are suggestive and interesting, if nothing more; the one on

Turner is wrongly attributed to Beardsley.

The illustrations to the volume include the eleven designs executed by the artist to accompany his story and poems; two other reprinted drawings; a drawing entitled "Arbuscula," which was reproduced in a *de luxe* volume limited to thirty-five copies; two hitherto unpublished unimportant sketches, drawings which would better have been left unpublished; and an hitherto unpublished frontispiece to Zola's "L'Abbé Mouret." The cover design is from an unfinished sketch for a cover left by the artist, and reproduced in one of the collections of his work published after his death.

II

BEARDSLEY's unfinished story, entitled "Under the Hill," was his most ambitious contribution to letters. His projected romance, in which was to have

been newly related the legend of Venus and Tannhäuser, was altered, we were told by Mr. Arthur Symons about a year ago in *The Saturday Review*, owing to “some complication between publishers,” and Helen and the Abbé of “Under the Hill” took their places. Several most engaging designs were made for his version of the story, however, in anticipation; one of these drawings, the design for the title-page, and such a design as has not adorned a volume since the days of Rubens and Holbein, was exhibited at the 1900 Paris Exposition. This drawing, with those for “Under the Hill,” is included in the two massive volumes of the artist’s work, the *Early* and the *Later*.

“Under the Hill,” styled by its composer a “romantic novel,” is a poem in prose, and in it Beardsley’s imagination and extraordinary inventive faculty ran

riot. It is exquisite in diction, and a really splendid piece of writing. An elaborate dedication prefaces this piece of literary composition, and it defies more specific classification, commencing with a list of the romancer's imaginary patron's virtues and accomplishments, conceived and written in quite the proper and approved fashion of the day when the patron flourished. Beardsley farther on acquaints the eminent and reverend Prince Giulio Poldo Pezzoli of his reason for choosing him as Patron:

“I have ever held that the critical faculty is more rare than the inventive. It is a faculty your Eminence possesses in so great a degree that your praise or blame is something oracular. . . . It is a pity that so perfect a Mæcenas should have no Horace to befriend, no Georgics to accept.”

This story of the “Mysterious Hill” tells us how the Abbé Fanfreluche visited Helen; how they dined on a terrace lit by four thousand candles, “not numbering those upon the tables,” and how the Abbé the next morning watched Helen feed Adolphe, her pet unicorn, with its “pretty palace of green foliage and golden bars.” Incidentally we are favoured with a little critique of Claude, with a narration of the story of Saint Rose of Lima, a long extract from the “Mémoires of the Marquis de Vandésir,”—a marquis of whom we have never before heard,—with notes on Racine, Morales, Rossini, Dorat, and with several paragraphs discussing the genius of Wagner, including a plea that operas should be performed in the morning—“when your brain and heart are not too troubled and tired with the secular influences of the growing day.”

Beardsley's two original poems are entitled "The Three Musicians" and "The Ballad of a Barber;" the first consisting of eight stanzas, the second of seventeen. Both are clever and diverting, in addition to being sufficiently well turned; but his translation from Catullus, which we append, is a much more superior performance than either.

CATULLUS

CARMEN CI

*By ways remote and distant waters sped,
 Brother, to thy sad grave-side am I come,
 That I may give the last gifts to the dead,
 And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb:
 Since she who now bestows and now denies
 Hath ta'en thee, hapless brother, from mine eyes.
 But lo! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years,
 Are made sad things to grace thy coffin shell,
 Take them, all drenchèd with a brother's tears,
 And, brother, for all time, hail and farewell!*

III

THE volume under consideration also contains quotations of criticisms which appeared in three London newspapers anent Beardsley's work, and letters written by Beardsley to the Pall Mall Budget and the Daily Chronicle in reply. Together they form quite a miniature "Gentle Art of Making Enemies," the author of which, as we have already seen, was another artist who frequently turned amateur in the domain of letters. In addition to these two letters of Beardsley's, Mr. Lane states that he hopes to publish a whole volume of the artist's letters at a later date, and certainly this would be worth doing, if I may judge from several dozen of them, addressed to one of his publishers, which I have in my possession. With one of these letters we bring this

brief essay to a close, and a letter of his we reproduce in facsimile, together with a part of another.

“ *Hotel Cosmopolitan,*
Menton, Dec. 26th. [1897]

MY DEAR SMITHERS: The Racines surprised and delighted me. I sit and muse that lovely maroquin. How charming of you to send me such a lovely gift. Thank you by the way, very much for having given the little Rapelets¹ to Mabel.² She was most grateful for them.

Proof of Volpone drawings arrived. Both blocks are quite good, that is supposing that a few faintnesses in the large picture are owing to printing only. (The hair in places, and the lines about the shoulder have suffered a little in my proof.)

¹ Pope's "*Rape of the Lock*," illustrated by Beardsley.

² The artist's sister.

The whole thing of course looks beastly grey and cold on Naumann's shiny paper. For the Prospectus I want you to use a *soft paper with plenty of warmth in it, so that the drawing may look as rich and velvety as possible*. Something similar to that used for the 'Morte d'Arthur' would do. As to the little reproduction of cover, 't is a failure. The masses of white look empty and meaningless and the whole gives a bad idea of the cover. Please don't use it in the Prospectus. You could use it for the catalogue and would be useful later in an inevitable tiny edition of Volpone. I see that 11 ins. x 8 1-2 ins. are the dimensions of the large block. You gave me the same measurements for size of page of the book. I suppose however you are making the sheet of Prospectus a good deal larger than sheet of book. That of course matters not. I yearn for a

sight of the wording. I wonder if you were able to make any use of my glowing periods.

If you have not already sent me the lady and the monkey do not do so as it will be quite out of keeping with the rest of the initials.¹

As to the Peacock, do you not think that the question of who *shall* write for it is far more important than the question of who shall *not*? Unless you have piles of stuff up your editorial sleeves, No. 1 could never be got ready by April 1st. But of this more anon. The thing must be edited with a savage strictness, and very definite ideas about everything get aired in it. Let us give birth to no more little backboneless babies. A little well directed talent is in a periodical infinitely more ef-

¹ *Published, with other drawings, as an illustration to Gautier's "Mademoiselle de Maupin."*

fective than any amount of sporadic and desultory genius (especially when there is no genius to be got).

On the art side, I suggest that it should attack *untiringly and unflinchingly* the Burne-Jones and Morrisian mediæval business, and set up a wholesome 17th and 18th century standard of what picture making should be.

On the literary side, impressionistic criticism and poetry and cheap short storyness should be gone for. I think the critical element should be paramount.

Let verse be printed very sparingly. I am anxious to see what O'Sullivan is made of in the prefatory line. He tells me he is at work on Volpone. I should advise you to let Gilbert Burgess do occasional things for us. Try to get together a staff. Oh for a Jeffreys or a Giffon, or anybody with something to say.

Have you settled definitely on calling it the Peacock?

As a title I rather fancy 'Books & Pictures.'

In haste,

Always

AUBREY BEARDSLEY."

NOTES ON THREE HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DRAWINGS BY BEARDSLEY

THE history of art contains but few names of artists who have attained great eminence as the creators of finished works in black and white. All of them have thrived upon the gloomy side of the Alps, and Albrecht Dürer is usually acclaimed the supreme master of this difficult medium of artistic expression. With Dürer, in all justice, should be ranked Aubrey Beardsley.

These two artists, standing alone in their splendid isolation, invite comparison; but it would not be very profitable for us to compare Beardsley with Dürer. The latter did not engrave the blocks of his woodcuts himself; this was entrusted to some artisan who gave us a more or

less exact copy of the drawing, depending on his skill; and for this reason these engravings are not entirely Dürer's own work. The comparison, nevertheless, would be an interesting one.

With the modern methods of reproducing drawings in exact facsimile by the aid of a camera, Beardsley had a decided advantage over Dürer. And I think that Beardsley actually did obtain greater and more wonderful results than Dürer; that Beardsley's drawings are a great advancement on the woodcuts of the Nürnberg master; that his work shows greater technical excellences.

In a similar manner, Joseph Pennell has compared the etchings of Whistler with those of Rembrandt, hitherto universally recognized as the greatest master of the etching, stating that "Whistler is as much in advance of Rembrandt as

that great artist was of his predecessors.” Some may think that Mr. Pennell’s case is stronger than mine; but certain it is that no one working within the narrow confines imposed by black ink on white paper has obtained the results arrived at by Albrecht Dürer and Aubrey Beardsley.

I

THE artist’s first drawings of note, although many of his very juvenile efforts are quite remarkable performances, were the long series of illustrations executed during 1893–94 to accompany a sumptuous edition of Malory’s “Le Morte d’Arthur.” The term “illustration” is used not without some hesitation, for each drawing is a decorative design of rare merit which may be viewed independently; as may also the borders and chapter-heading and tail-piece vi-

gnettes. In all these drawings Beardsley has blended his own technique in a most engaging manner with the technique of the designers of the fifteenth century woodcuts.

Unfortunately, however, the artist lost interest in his great task before all of the drawings had been made; and in only about one half of them has he showed his real power. In many of the vignettes and borders Beardsley displays his love of the bizarre; and at about the same time he gave us a set of most remarkable grotesques, displaying his rich invention and extraordinary control over the single line. Other of his drawings conspicuous on account of this line—the same line employed by the Greeks on their vase-paintings—include, among others, those made for the works of Aristophanes, Juvenal and Lucian.

The first of the four hitherto unpub-

lished drawings by Beardsley, which is here presented in reduced facsimile, is an incompleted border design for this edition of Malory's immortal work. His sure and unflinching line, and his entire confidence in himself, are excellently illustrated in this partially completed drawing. The artist seldom, if ever, made preliminary sketches for his drawings; and yet usually every line put on the paper was put down to remain. For some reason, or for no reason, the artist abandoned the idea of finishing and including this border along with the other "Morte d'Arthur" drawings. Instead, he presented it to a school-fellow and brother artist, from whose hands it recently passed into those of the writer's.

II

THE second of the plates for which these notes have been prepared is a facsimile reproduction of a letter written in India ink on drawing paper. In this letter the artist has introduced a very formal design of an architectural nature; and it is interesting to note in this connection that Beardsley studied in an architect's office before devoting himself entirely to art.

III

THE third plate, showing a landscape sketched in pen and ink with some wash added, was also executed on a letter, as may be seen from the reproduction in facsimile. Much more than the other, it displays the artist's genius and his marvellously sure touch, since it was evidently rapidly accomplished. As it was

AB.

I think a very long reproduction
of the cover design would look
pretty on the back of the prospectus.
But of course have black & white
reverses. White design on black
background. It could be done

Hotel Cosmopolitan
Menton

Dec 8th

The wording of the prospectus had
better be a compound of the
Rape of the L. & M^{lle} de Maupin
prospectuses. I have
nearly finished a good introductory

I send you, my dear Smithers, today, the cover, & note
Design for Prospectus of "Volpone". Especially of ^{to} Volpone

the latter let me have proofs on various papers at
once. I am anxious to see the result. Let-

Herschel make the block? But command
& conjure him to take the utmost care.

Make the prospectus as handsome as possible
I know you will like both of these drawings very
much

~~and prospectus~~ always Aubrey Beardsley

I hope you
Keep well. But
London must be
vile. ^{what} a time
the letter
take coming &
going.

not very often that the artist gave us a diverting little sketch of this character, it therefore forms a delightful contrast to his almost invariably highly wrought and very precisely executed drawings. But frequently, however, as in this instance, he has surprised us with a lightness of touch which we do not expect to find in his work. This quality, invariably apparent in Whistler's work, was not striven after by Beardsley; both artists had a rare instinct for decoration and a genius for placing masses,—but here the comparison ceases. This is generally speaking, for Beardsley was very protean: no one group of his drawings can be called “characteristic” examples of his art.

WHISTLER'S "REALISM"

V ERSATILITY has been a characteristic of several great masters of art. Michael Angelo and Rembrandt were both great painters, but Michael Angelo was a greater sculptor, Rembrandt a greater etcher, since he and Whistler are universally acknowledged to be the supreme masters of this mode of artistic expression. But one must look in vain to discover such a brilliant parade of varied genius, such a mastery shown over several media, as made by the master of art so lately deceased.

Whistler mastered painting, etching, the lithograph, the pastel, the water-colour, pen and ink, wash, and pencil. His subjects included portraits, *genre* pieces, landscapes, marines, and "Nocturnes" — the first paintings to depict the mystery

and poetry of night. Sometimes Whistler gave us harmonies in his paintings composed of the most sombre colours, frequently, as in the portraits, being in large part painted with such luminous blacks as only Velasquez was able to obtain; occasionally, as in the canvases painted while obviously under the spell of Japan, the rare harmonies are composed of colours of the greatest brilliancy.

An art so individual as Whistler's was, an art so isolated from any school, defies classification. The scheme of a recent admirable work on the art of the last century demanded, however, that his art be ticketed and labelled, and Whistler was placed in that section of the book headed "Realism." Employing the term in its original, technical, and proper sense, as it is understood when applied to Manet or

Degas, it is incorrect to speak of Whistler as a Realist. Even giving the word a wider meaning, applying it to all artists holding that art should find its inspirations in contemporary and national life, and should depict subjects as they actually appear before them, realistically and without selection—even this category does not include Whistler; it is only in the most general manner imaginable that the term may with propriety be applied to Whistler's art. An Impressionist was Whistler only inasmuch as he recorded fleeting and momentary effects—his theory of colouring is in direct antagonism to the brilliant spectral palette of the Impressionists.

Realism was the dominating note in art, as it was in literature, during the latter half of the nineteenth century,¹ but it was

¹ “*Tolstoy in fiction, Ibsen in drama, Walt Whit-*

in quite a different manner that Whistler and the Realists and Impressionists viewed nature. The latter chose for the subjects of their paintings such scenes as the cheaper Parisian music-halls and cafés suggested; such a landscape as a forlorn and sordid stretch of land bordering on a large town; such subjects for portraits as washerwomen, vagabonds, specimens of depraved humanity, an ancient ballet-dancer horrible as she poses in her make-up in a bright morning sun. Moreover, the Realists often ignored the demands of art and of taste, and made their canvases cynical to the point of caricature—more unmerciful

man in poetry, and Wagner in music . . . brought into art a new spirit, and, in some respects, a new form. To the same type of creative force must now be added the name of Rodin" (Dircks' Auguste Rodin). The author might have also included the names of Whistler and Aubrey Beardsley.

you hear further from me - for
kindly call on her return to town.

I am going to
of Mrs Alexander to choose a

Dear Sir - You will receive visits from several gentlemen during the next few days, who will wish to see the picture of Lady Mary -

I trust that you will have word, if absent your self, that the young men shall always ~~show~~ show the picture out and show it exactly as you do yourself by the window - slightly bent forward - and with the same care -

You will keep the picture until

you hear further from me - for probably her duty & so many
kindly calls on her return to home -

I am going to try and get you the portrait
of Miss Alexander to clean and varnish -

Yours truly
Miss Wm. A.

probably his duty to be may
be -

try and get you the portrait -
and overnick -

Yours Truly
J. M. W. W. W.

—

than snapshots. At the same time, it is necessary to add, they founded the intensely modern and national school which reigns supreme in France to-day.

With Whistler it was different: he never descended to the obvious or commonplace. No matter how prosaic the scene, to him it is brilliant with poetry and music. The following passage from "Ten O'Clock," the artist's lecture on art, shows the spirit in which he painted and etched the Thames: "And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanile, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairyland is before us . . . "

Manet or Degas could have success-

fully illustrated Zola. Whistler might have illustrated Flaubert. All were Realists, but Whistler and Flaubert were artists in addition.

THE WHISTLER MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

THE exhibition of Whistler's works held in Boston during February and March, 1904, was the best kind of a memorial the master could have received. And it was fitting and proper that it should have been in America,—not far, in fact, from the artist's birthplace. The Copley Society could not obtain the portrait of the painter's mother, nor that of Carlyle; but among the eighty-two paintings in oil which they did gather together were to be found "The White Girl," "The Little White Girl," "La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine," "Le Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac," "Pablo Sarasate," "The Fur Jacket," and "The Music Room," and the exhibition was therefore a representative one. With the additional

03. 91

17. 234

exhibits of two hundred and thirty etchings and dry-points, eighty lithographs, thirty-nine water-colours, thirty-six pastels, and forty-five drawings, the value of the exhibition was greatly increased, for we were thus able to study and compare the results obtained with all of the various media of artistic expression in which Whistler experimented and studied, which he mastered, and in which he discovered new possibilities.

As a matter of fact, the array of pictures was really overwhelming as it was, and one thought of the very slender offerings which Whistler himself arranged, — exhibitions in which a dozen etchings or pastels were given all the glory of a room to themselves, and a room especially decorated to receive them. However, one should not criticize the exhibition on this score, for, after all, it was only a matter

of having sufficient time at one's disposal.

The paintings—with the frames which the artist designed for them, of dull gold, for the most part plain, except moulding in parallel lines, and sometimes decorated with a pattern in paint—were all shown in the same gallery, a long room draped in an admirable grey material, with several golden butterflies appearing at intervals in the frieze. At one end was hung, in the place of honour, “The White Girl,” certainly one of Whistler's very greatest achievements; at the other, “Rose and Silver,” “La Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine,” one of the artist's most ambitious pictures, both as regards quality and size, but not one of his most beautiful and harmonious arrangements of colours.

Other notable portrait and figure pieces included such masterpieces of the artist's genius as “Gold and Brown,” the portrait

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of the artist belonging to Mr. George W. Vanderbilt (one of the most attractive of the portraits of himself), and a canvas one does not recall having seen before, either in the original or reproduction,—a full-length portrait of a man, known as “An Arrangement in Flesh Colour and Brown,” painted in Paris in 1894; the splendid portrait of Miss Rosa Corder; “Portrait de Madame S——;” the sombre portrait of Mrs. Cassatt; a masterfully posed portrait of a woman, entitled “L’Andalusienne;” “Harmony in Red;” “Whistler with a Hat;” the four small and somewhat similar paintings of little girls, named “Grenat et Or,” “The Little Red Glove,” “The Rose of Lyme-Regis,” and “Rose and Gold”—all equally engaging. Also shown, among numerous others, were six of the “Japanese” paintings, executed in brilliant pigments with a full and liquid brush,

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superb “symphonies” in purple, vermillion, white, blue, green. A great many of the artist’s delightful *genre* pieces were also on view, and an excellent selection of his amazing “Nocturnes,” the unequalled paintings of dusk and night upon the Thames. Chief among these latter were “Cremorne Lights,” “Bognor,” — a painting often seen in America on exhibition,—and “The Lagoon, Venice.”

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The etchings and dry-points were displayed in a long apartment cut in three by two screens, which, with the walls, were covered with a white material, while a frieze extending around the room was of pale yellow. They convinced one that no artist has even approached Whistler in this medium except Rembrandt, if any further proofs were needed. Framed in white, with white mounts, the plates appeared to advantage, and formed as representa-

tive a collection as one could desire. The lithographs, likewise, called for much attention, and showed him to be the equal of any one in this fascinating medium. The same may be said also of the water-colours and pastels which were shown. These, with the etchings and lithographs, seemed to express his genius better than the oil paintings, for his was not a vigorous art, but the last word in an art refined and elegant. Nothing could be more perfect in their way than such of the pastels—they are all on brown paper, with the outlines sketched in in black chalk—as a figure lightly draped in blue and purple called “Morning Glories,” and similar designs entitled “Mother and Child,” “Blue and Violet,” “May,” an exquisite undraped figure, “The Purple Cap,” and many others, including “A Venetian Doorway,” this differing from the artist’s other

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pastels insomuch as it is almost an architect's drawing, so complete is it in detail.

The drawings on exhibition, some executed in pencil, some in pen and ink, others in sepia wash, and some sketches in water-colour or pastel, though slight performances, were designs full of charm. Very attractive were the sketches made at Ajaccio, and altogether engaging was the little pen and ink drawing of an old house at Canterbury. Twenty-two drawings and sketches, some executed with a pen, others in water-colour, done by the artist while at school, were most interesting, and were shown for the first time, not having even been chronicled before. The two drawings made while at West Point, under instruction, from copies, were on view also, as was a cover designed by Whistler for the "U. S. Military Academy Song of the Graduates, 1852." None of

these three drawings would be recognized as being Whistler's, so different are they both in subject and in treatment from his later work.

THE END

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